

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-18, 27-34 and 41-56 are pending in this application. Claims 19-24 and 35-40 have been previously withdrawn. Claims 1, 25 and 51 have been amended. Applicants submit that claims 1 and 25 have been amended to further clarify the claim language and claim 51 has been amended to remedy an informality. Applicants submit that no new matter has been added by way of the amendment. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Applicants thank the Examiner for indication that claim 41 has been allowed.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 51 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite due to an informality. More specifically, the term “automobile body” does not have proper antecedent basis. The claim has been amended to recite the term “workpiece” instead of “automobile body” which has proper antecedent basis in claim 50. Therefore, Applicants request withdrawal of this ground of rejection.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 6-10, 12-13, 25, 44 and 47-56 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as allegedly being anticipated by Clitheros, et al. US Patent No. 4,564,410. Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are patentably distinct from the cited reference.

Amended independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*:

An apparatus for processing a portion...

wherein the processing head moves in the substantially longitudinal direction relative to and along the concave portion, while the processing head moves in the widthwise direction through contact of the tip with either of the side walls of the concave portion in response to change in course of the concave portion in the widthwise direction of the automobile body when the slidably supported structure is moved relative to the automobile body by the longitudinal drive device.

Applicants submit that the Clitheros, et al. patent does not anticipate the elements recited in amended independent claim 1. More specifically, Applicants submit that Clitheros, et al. do not teach, suggest, or disclose a processing apparatus wherein “the processing head moves in the widthwise direction through contact of the tip with either of the side walls...” as recited in independent claim 1.

Instead of imparting motion to the processing head through contact of the tip with either side wall, as recited in claim 1 and discussed in the specification on page 16, ¶ [0054], Clitheros, et al., disclose a fixed adhesive application apparatus where the processing head is driven solely by a series of four motors. Clitheros, et al. disclose, “the [processing head or] nozzle 16 is moved smoothly and accurately around the peripheral channel 26 by the computer numerical control system 18 controlling the speeds and directions of rotation of all four of the drive motors 44, 74, 84 and 92.” (See, col. 7, lns. 8-13). Furthermore, Clitheros, et al. discloses the computer numerical control system 18:

includes three separate drive motors for controlling the movement of said dispensing means relative to said rigid framework in three linear dimensions all mutually at right angles to one another, each drive motor controlling said movement in one linear dimension and a fourth drive motor controlling angular movement of said nozzle around each corner of said window opening... (See, col. 2, lines 29-37).

Moreover, Clitheros, et al. disclose that in their invention, “all four of said drive motors...[are subject to] full positional and speed control exerted by said computer

numerical control system.” (See, col. 2, lines 38-40). Accordingly, Clitheros, et al. do not disclose, teach or suggest a processing apparatus wherein the “processing head moves in the widthwise direction through contact of the tip with either of the side walls,” as recited in independent claim 1.

While the Applicants disagree with the Examiner’s characterization of the phrase “wherein the slidably supported structure is free to move...” in independent claim 1 discussed on page 9 of the Office Action, Applicants submit that moving the processing head as claimed is patentably distinct from the computer drive system disclosed in Clitheros, et al. For at least this reason, Applicants submit that amended independent claim 1 is patentably distinct from Clitheros, et al. Applicants submit that amended independent claim 25 is patentably distinct from Clitheros, et al. for at least a similar reason. Furthermore, Applicants submit that claims 6-10, 12, 13, 44, 47-56, which are directly or indirectly dependent on amended independent claims 1 or 25, respectively are patentably distinct from Clitheros, et al. for at least a similar reason. Therefore, Applicants request withdrawal of this ground of rejections.

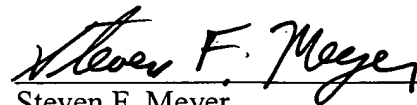
CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims and allowance of this application.

Respectfully submitted,
MORGAN & FINNEGAN, L.L.P.

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By:



Steven F. Meyer

Registration No. 35,613

Mailing Address:
MORGAN & FINNEGAN, L.L.P.
3 World Financial Center
New York, New York 10281-2101
(212) 415-8700 Telephone
(212) 415-8701 Facsimile